

# The Research – Practice Connection

## Lessons From the Interstitial Space

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# Session Agenda

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*Background*

*Summary of keynote address*

*Case scenarios of working from the middle*

*Discussion*



# Background

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Teaching and Curriculum  
Development in the Health Professions

Director of the Nebraska  
State Adult Literacy Resource Center

Co-Director of the  
Michigan Center for Career & Technical Education

# My Argument

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- Reject:
  - Dichotomy of research and practice
  - Marketplace model of research to practice
- Research and practice are in a dialogical, dialectical relation
  - Research and theory are a means and not an end of our practice
- Knowledge derived flows from neither one nor the other but the work of them in application

# Summary of Key Points

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- Our work is grounded in, arises from, and returns to the world of practice
- Research and practice are dynamic aspects of a greater whole
- The inter-relationship of research and practice reveals the specific, contextual, and political nature of the problem
- The relationship represents commitment to lifelong learning

# Working Within the “Interstitial Spaces”


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- Both researcher and practitioner
- Align and partner with practice contexts
- Let research emerge from the practice
- Knowledge derived reflects both the particular and the general

# The Research - Practice Connection

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Practice  $\longleftrightarrow$  Research



# Case Studies of Working in the Middle

Developing integrated curriculum

Fostering change through teacher  
professional development

Teaching through online, problem-  
based consensus groups



# Developing More Integrated Curriculum

- Practice context: *Developmental education in community college*
- Problem: *Making curriculum more meaningful and relevant for adult learners*
- Theory: *How people come to know*
  - Learning as meaning-making
  - Contextual learning
  - Experience-based learning
  - Discipline-based learning
- Outcomes:
  - *College needed to develop a formal DE program*
  - *Organizational issues; professional identity*

# Professional Development for Adult Education Teachers

- Practice context: *Fostering change in practice through ABE/GED teacher training institutes*
- Problem: *Increase the use of knowledge gained from PD in practice*
- Theory: *Motivation to learn; self-efficacy; behavioral change*
- Outcomes:
  - *Change in teacher practices, Use of one another to address barriers in implementing change*
  - *Power of learning circles, Commitment to change strategy*

# Collaborative Learning in Online Environments

- Practice Context: *Graduate-level, online course on adult learning*
- Problem: *Teach adult learning online through problem-based, consensus groups*
- Theory: *Collaborative learning; group dynamics experience-based, problem-based learning*
- Outcomes:
  - *Improved performance; Higher levels of interaction, work grounded in content*
  - *Greater understanding of dynamics of online groups*

# Conclusions

- Research and practice are iterative, cyclical and dialogical processes
- What we come to know arises from their inter-relationship
- Knowledge derived is both concrete and specific, and abstract and general
- Relationship highlights the intrinsically, social, political, and moral use and production of knowledge
- Calls into question the very usefulness of the dichotomy of research and practice

A spiral-bound notebook with a light beige, textured cover. The word "Discussion" is written in a black, serif font in the center of the cover. The spiral binding is visible on the left side.

# Discussion